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**Sent:** Wed 3/16/2016 1:09:53 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: News Clips (PFOA)

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**Activists Demand Action Against Industrial Chemical in Water**

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MARCH 15, 2016

ALBANY, N.Y. — Prized for its ability to make things super-slick, it was used for decades in the manufacture of Teflon pans, Gore-Tex jackets, ski wax, carpets and the linings of pizza boxes and microwave popcorn bags.

Now, with the suspected cancer-causing chemical PFOA being phased out in the U.S., it is still very much around, turning up in the water in factory towns across the country — most recently in upstate New York and Vermont — where it is blamed by residents for cancers and other maladies.

The latest cases have brought renewed demands that the Environmental Protection Agency regulate PFOA the way it does arsenic, lead and dozens of other contaminants, and set stringent, enforceable limits on how much of the substance can be in drinking water.

"Where is the government that is supposed to protect people and the environment? It's an outrage," said Tracy Carluccio of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, which uncovered PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid, in tap water in New Jersey a decade ago.

In their defense, EPA officials said that the agency has been considering for years whether regulations are needed for PFOA and related perfluorinated chemicals, but that it is a drawn-out testing and evaluation process dictated by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. In the meantime, the EPA has taken action around the country to fine companies and force them to clean up such chemicals.

For now, there are no mandatory limits on how much PFOA, also called C8, can be in drinking water. The same goes for its cousin perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, which is used in firefighting foam. The Pentagon is checking for traces of PFOS in the water at 664 U.S. military sites where fire or crash training has been conducted.

As part of its review of such chemicals, the EPA ordered nationwide testing of water supplies in 2013.

Of 4,764 water supplies, 103 systems in 29 states had trace amounts of PFOA, but none exceeded 400 parts per trillion, EPA's advisory level for short-term exposure — water you drink for only a few weeks. Seven had levels slightly over 100 ppt, the new advisory level for long-term exposure — for the water you drink for years — that the EPA is expected to set this spring.

But the EPA's national survey didn't tell the whole story.

Towns the size of Hoosick Falls, New York, whose water supply serves just 4,500 people, weren't included in the testing. Its PFOA level of 600 ppt was discovered in village wells in 2014 only because residents, concerned about what they perceived as a high cancer rate in the plastics factory town, demanded testing.

In January, after the lead crisis in Flint, Michigan, focused national attention on water contamination, EPA and New York officials warned people in Hoosick Falls not to drink the water. The state is promising a new water supply with a price tag of \$10 million.

More recently, testing turned up PFOA at about 100 ppt in drinking water in nearby Petersburg, New York, and North Bennington, Vermont, which also had plastics plants. On Tuesday, Vermont officials said a second round of water testing in North Bennington yielded readings of up to 2,730 ppt.

Michael Hickey, a local insurance underwriter, exposed the contamination in Hoosick Falls, a bucolic community near the Vermont state line known as the hometown of folk artist Grandma Moses.

"My father died of kidney cancer. My grandmother had kidney cancer," Hickey said. "My concern isn't really about me; it's about my 5-year-old son."

At the least, health and environmental advocates say, communities that have factories and other installations that used the chemical should test their water.

"I would consider it an urgent priority to decrease exposures," said Philippe Grandjean, a researcher at the Harvard School of Public Health who believes the 100 ppt safe-exposure level EPA is proposing is still 100 times too high.

Vermont health officials, for example, have set that state's PFOA level at 20 ppt, based on the same research the EPA is relying on.

Class-action lawsuits have been filed as far back as 2001 against companies such as 3M and DuPont over PFOA contamination of water near factories or disposal sites in a host of communities, including Decatur, Alabama, and Cottage Grove, Minnesota.

In settling a lawsuit involving 70,000 people in West Virginia and Ohio, DuPont agreed in 2004 to install filters to remove PFOA from water systems in six communities surrounding its Parkersburg, West Virginia plant. In October, DuPont was found liable for a woman's kidney cancer in the first of 3,500 lawsuits filed by people with diseases they blame on the contamination.

The American Water Works Association, a water industry group, believes that nationwide

regulation of PFOA isn't needed but that testing for the substance at manufacturing sites would be prudent, spokesman Greg Kail said.

Advanced filtration systems to remove PFOA can cost millions of dollars up front, plus tens of thousands a year in operating costs.

3M invented the chemical 1947, and it became so ubiquitous that more than 98 percent of Americans have traces in their blood, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 3M began to phase it out in 2002 in response to health concerns raised by the EPA. DuPont and eight other companies later agreed to do the same by 2015.

Studies funded by the DuPont settlement concluded PFOA is a "probable cause" of six illnesses, including thyroid disease and kidney and testicular cancer. Those studies were based on people who drank water with PFOA at a level of 50 ppt for a year — half what the EPA is expected to set as the safe level. Other studies have linked PFOA to low birthweight and other problems in children.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo warned that PFOA and other chemicals will probably be discovered in the water across the state and country.

"We allowed waste disposal in fashions that, in retrospect, were not prudent," he said, "and now, in many ways, we are paying the price as a society."

Rome Sentinel

### **Feds eye Griffiss groundwater**

Published Mar 15, 2016 at 11:37am

The military is checking whether chemicals from firefighting foam might have contaminated groundwater at hundreds of sites nationwide, including the former Griffiss Air Force Base, and potentially tainted drinking water, the Defense Department reported.

The checks will be carried out at 664 sites where the military has conducted fire or crash training, the department told The Associated Press recently.

Questions about contamination and polluted sites are not new to Griffiss. Starting before the base closed, the U.S. government has spent millions of dollars at Griffiss identifying, evaluating and remediating contaminated sites.

Since the late 1980s, the Air Force has completed preliminary assessments, site investigations and remedial investigations at more than 80 sites at the base. This included sampling and analysis of soil, groundwater, surface water and sediment.

In October 1991, municipal water lines were installed east and southeast of the base, according to the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. The water lines became operational later that year, and were paid for by the Air Force. About 300 residences in this area had private wells. Private well contamination was first detected in

this area.

Griffiss' flying mission ended in 1995 as a result of the Air Force closing and consolidating facilities. The Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate and the Northeast Air Defense Sector continue to operate at Griffiss, as does the Defense Finance and Accounting Service center. The federal installations are anchors in the surrounding business park.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency placed Griffiss on the Superfund Program's National Priorities List in July 1987. The EPA removed more than 2,900 of 3,552 acres at the former Air Force base from the list of potentially hazardous sites in 2009 — as a result of the ongoing cleanup that has cost more than \$100 million.

Among the New York sites being reviewed are Griffiss, Fort Drum, Seneca Army Depot, Plattsburgh Air Force Base and Hancock Field Air National Guard Base.

So far, 28 naval sites have been tested, with one site in Virginia and one in New Jersey showing chemicals in water at levels above the EPA's guidance, the Navy said. Tests at 26 other naval sites in mostly coastal areas have either come up under federally acceptable levels or are pending.

The Navy is giving bottled water to its personnel at a naval landing field in Virginia and is testing wells in a nearby rural area after the discovery of perfluorinated chemicals in drinking water, which the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry says may be associated with prostate, kidney and testicular cancer, along with other health issues.

The Navy found perfluorinated chemicals in the groundwater monitoring wells at Naval Weapons Station Earle in Colts Neck, New Jersey, but not in the drinking water supply. Test results from off-base drinking water wells are expected this month.

And several congressmen are raising concerns about the safety of drinking water near two former Navy bases in suburban Philadelphia. The lawmakers say firefighting foams might be the source of chemicals found in nearly 100 public and private wells near the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Willow Grove and the Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster.

The Navy began sampling water at bases in December.

The foam is used at locations where potentially catastrophic fuel fires can occur, such as in a plane crash, because it can rapidly extinguish them. It contains perfluorooctane sulfonate and perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOS and PFOA, both considered emerging contaminants by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Defense Department said that until foam without perfluorinated chemicals can be certified for military use, it is removing stocks of it in some places and also trying to prevent any uncontrolled releases during training exercises.

The military is beginning to assess the risk to groundwater at the training sites not only to determine the extent of contamination, but also to identify any action the Defense Department needs to take, said Lt. Col. Eric D. Badger, a department spokesman.

California has the most, with 85, followed by Texas, with 57, Florida, with 38, and Alaska and South Carolina, each with 26, according to a list provided to the AP. Each state has at least one site.

Staff and Associated Press reports contributed to this story.

**GROUNDWATER CHECK** — The military is checking whether chemicals from firefighting foam might have contaminated groundwater at hundreds of sites nationwide, including the former Griffiss Air Force Base. A new water system was installed to provide clean municipal drinking water in 1991. (Sentinel photo by John Clifford)

### **PFOA found in more North Bennington wells, community meeting slated for Wednesday**

By Edward Damon

[berkshireeagle.com](http://berkshireeagle.com)

Posted: 03/15/2016 08:27:16 PM EDT

**NORTH BENNINGTON**>> Results from a second round of water testing found about 50 wells have levels of a potentially harmful chemical above what the state says is acceptable, according to the office of Gov. Peter Shumlin.

The results will be the subject of a community meeting Wednesday, March 16 at 6 p.m. in the Tishman Lecture Hall at Bennington College.

Environmental and health officials will be on hand to review the test results and to answer residents' questions.

A total of about 185 private wells within 1.5 miles of the former ChemFab facility in North Bennington have been tested for PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid), a man-made chemical formerly used to make Teflon.

Of the 67 results returned to the state late Monday, 52 private wells had PFOA levels above the state's acceptable amount of 20 parts per trillion (ppt). Results in this round of testing ranged from 38 ppt to 2,730 ppt, according to an official update from the office of Gov. Peter Shumlin.

Three of the samples had levels below 20 ppt. In 12 of the samples, PFOA was not detected.

Most of the results are from samples collected outside of the immediate area of the former ChemFab facility.

Staff with the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) began going door-to-door on Saturday to notify residents of test results.

## Advertisement

"Additional testing of the North Bennington public water system, including samples from the elementary school, have confirmed no PFOA contamination," a statement from Shumlin's office said.

The feds classify PFOA as an "emerging contaminant" and don't require municipalities or well owners to test for it. The EPA is studying the chemical and currently only has an "advisory level" for short-term exposure of 400 ppt. But Hoosick, N.Y. well owners are being told to avoid drinking and cooking with their water if tests show levels of 100 ppt or above.

The state began testing private wells after receiving a tip from a citizen. Initial testing taken last month found the chemical, which has been linked to cause kidney and thyroid cancers as well as other diseases, was in a handful of private wells.

The first batch of results from well testing was returned late last week. Of those 34 results, 29 had levels between 38 and 2,270 ppt.

Bottled water is being made available to residents and is being delivered to impacted homes.

Environmental officials are expected to start collecting 100 soil samples from 25 locations at the former ChemFab site on Wednesday. Results are expected in two weeks.

## WCAX

### **More water contamination found; 2nd community being tested**

Posted: Mar 15, 2016

By Lynzi DeLuccia

POWNAL, Vt. -

More tests have turned up more chemical contamination in North Bennington. And now a second Vermont community is being tested for PFOA in the water supply.

The state says it has results from 67 tests in North Bennington, and 52 private wells have now tested positive for the cancer-causing chemical. The public water supply there is considered safe.

There is a meeting about the situation Wednesday evening. The location has been moved. It will be at 6 p.m. at the Tishman Lecture Hall on the Bennington College campus.

Now, the state is moving to test the water supply in a nearby community.

First, Hoosick Falls, New York, then a growing number of private wells contaminated with PFOA in North Bennington. Is Pownal, Vermont, next?

"Right now, as you can imagine, citizens across the state or municipalities are giving us a call if they have concerns and saying, 'Would you look into my water supply?' Or, 'Was there a company near me that had it, you know, how to use the same chemicals?' And so we're looking to answer those questions out of abundance of caution," said Alyssa Schuren, the commissioner of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.

Pownal sits 15 miles from North Bennington on the Hoosic River, and is the home to the former Warren Wire Manufacturing company and the Pownal Tannery. Schuren says the DEC has no reason to believe the town's water supply is contaminated, but residents' concerns are prompting water and soil testing.

"I can't really say for sure until the tests come back," Karen Barney said.

Barney moved to Pownal from Bennington more than 20 years ago. She doesn't believe Warren Wire, where her husband once worked, used the chemical PFOA in production. The potential carcinogen was used in Teflon production in both Hoosick Falls and North Bennington.

"I think we'll be fine, but, never know... never say never," Barney said.

Still, Barney is relieved the state is testing just in case PFOA is in the ground that supplies her neighborhood's water.

"It could be, because when you work with things years ago, you never knew if it was going to be a long-term thing," Barney said. "You can't really say that nothing's going to happen when you don't know for sure."

Since 1988, Mack Molding has owned the vacant warehouse where Warren Wire used to be, producing wire coated with Teflon. William Bolton, who worked at Warren Wire, said he wouldn't be surprised if the site is contaminated with levels of PFOA.

"Working with Teflon, when the blue smoke was in the mill and we didn't have proper ventilation, we'd all get the shakes. And another concern is all these operators I worked with, every one of them is dead except for me," Bolton said.

Bolton says it's hard to say if possible chemicals in the air or water could be to blame, but the recent discoveries do concern him.

Testing in Pownal will begin this week, but the DEC doesn't expect to find much of anything. PFOA was tested for throughout most parts of Vermont between 2013 and 2015.

"It all came back clean," Schuren said. "So we don't expect to be finding them everywhere, but we want to be responsive as people have concerns that they were looking into it in Pownal."

The DEC plans on supplying test results for Pownal residents as soon as they come in.

VNPR

## **New Results Show At Least 52 Wells Contaminated With PFOA**

By Taylor Dobbs • 14 hours ago

State officials released new test results Tuesday that show more widespread chemical contamination in private wells in North Bennington.

Of 67 results the state has received so far, 52 private wells showed traces of PFOA, a chemical that was used at the Chemfab plant in North Bennington before the plant closed in 2002.

State officials discovered the contamination last month and have been working to determine how far the contamination has spread and how residents will get clean water in the future.

In the interim, the company that owned the plant, Saint Gobain, is paying for the testing as well as the cost of having water brought to affected residents.

The public water supply in Bennington tested negative for PFOA last month.

In addition to the water testing, state officials plan to begin soil sampling Wednesday at more than two dozen locations near the Chemfab plant.

## **Drinking Water Concerns Arise in Another Town – North Bennington, Vermont**

Published:

Mar 15 2016 12:00 PM EDT

By Sean Breslin

[weather.com](http://weather.com)

A handful of residents in a southern Vermont town of 1,600 have been drinking tainted water, recent well tests near a former Chemfab plant revealed.

The state tested 34 private wells in North Bennington, Vermont, and in 29 of those tests, high levels of the carcinogen perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, were found in the water, according to Vermont Public Radio. The samples found a range of PFOA from 38 parts per trillion to 2,270 parts per trillion, all of which are higher than the acceptable level of 20 parts per trillion, the report added.



(MORE: Michigan Approves \$30 Million for Flint Water Bills)

"When we took the samples, initially we started closest to the former Chemfab facility and we worked out from there," Department of Conservation Commissioner Alyssa Schuren told VPR. "And so a lot of the initial tests we're getting back are closest to the facility, and so one would expect these to be the highest results. Right now we're working to overlay the test results on a map, but our initial review is showing that we're seeing some of the contamination in every direction."

Additional tests will be performed on water and soil in the area to get better data on the widespread nature of this issue, Schuren also said. Tests on the town's public drinking water sources, however, show no signs of contamination, the report added.

When the plant was operating, residents nearby frequently complained about emissions created by the factory, according to a separate VPR report. It sometimes got so bad that people couldn't go outside without getting sick, resident Jim Goodine told VPR.

"In hindsight I'm kicking myself as hard as I can," Goodine told VPR. "I feel horrible. I feel partly responsible that I didn't go to the state and say, 'You have to do something here. You have to find out what's going on.'"

Officials have been in contact with residents to share the state's findings, and they've scheduled a community meeting Wednesday night, VPR also said. Saint-Gobain, the company that owned the old plant, is providing free bottled water to residents affected by the contamination.

PFOA is a man-made chemical that's used in the process of making Teflon and other similar products, according to the American Cancer Society. Although there's no clear evidence that PFOA causes cancer, high exposure to the chemical may lead to a higher risk for cancer, but the ACS admits more studies need to be performed before any conclusions can be drawn.

WPTZ

## **52 more wells test positive for PFOA in North Bennington**

Public meeting scheduled for Wednesday night

Mar 15, 2016

MONTPELIER, Vt. —Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin said more wells in North Bennington have tested positive for the toxic chemical PFOA.

Shumlin said the second round of well water test results were received Monday by state officials.

Of the 67 private wells tested, 52 showed levels of PFOA higher than the Health Department's acceptable level of 20 parts per trillion.

The results ranged from 38 parts per trillion to 2,730 parts per trillion, the governor said.

Twelve samples did not detect any PFOA and three showed results within acceptable levels. PFOA is a known carcinogen.

In all, 185 wells within a 1.5-mile radius of the former Chemfab plant have been tested. Six wells tested positive for PFOA in February.

Testing to the public water supply, including samples taken from an elementary school, show no PFOA contamination.

Soil sampling at the former facility and residences where PFOA levels were detected will begin Wednesday.

State officials will collect 100 soil samples from more than 25 locations. The results were expected back in the next few weeks.

"This feels like a little piece of heaven for all of us who live on the hill on this beautiful street and we have a nice view and everything, but you kind of want to feel like, you know, the food that you're eating out of the garden and the water you're drinking is also good, too," Rev. Penny Rich-Smith said.

Her home is on the edge of the radius of where testing took place. Results for Rich-Smith's water came back positive for PFOA contamination.

"It's hard using bottled water for everything," Rich-Smith said.

The Department of Environmental Conservation began notifying residents of the test results Sunday. The notifications came as New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo declared neighboring Hoosick Falls' PFOA water contamination at non-detectable levels.

A public meeting about the test results and contamination was planned for 6 p.m. Wednesday at Tishman Lecture Hall on the Bennington College campus.

Bottled water remains available for residents to pick up at the North Bennington Village Variety Store at 9 Route 67 West. It was also being delivered to affected homes.

Two water tankers from which residents can draw water were located across the street from the former Chemfab plant at the intersection of Water Street and Route 67A. Water treatment systems were also being offered to affected residents.

A state information office is also open at 324 Main St.

### **PFOA crisis offers lots of lessons**

03/14/2016

Daily Gazette, The

Sara Floss

I took a homebuyer education course over the weekend, in the hopes of educating myself about the homebuying process, which terrifies me.

The course taught me a lot, but I wouldn't say I'm any less terrified.

If anything, the class made me more terrified, as the presenters spent a great deal of time warning us about the problems we might encounter if we purchased poorly. They talked about high property taxes, flooding and foreclosure, but also radon, mold and lead. The toxic chemical PFOA wasn't specifically mentioned, but the village of Hoosick Falls functioned as a cautionary tale about the consequences of owning a home in a community plunged into crisis.

On Sunday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that PFOA had successfully been removed from Hoosick Falls' water supply, more than six weeks after an environmental emergency was declared in the Rensselaer County village. Despite this, officials are still advising residents not to use tap water for drinking or cooking until a full flush of the water system has been completed.

Given how poorly state and federal officials have handled the question of whether Hoosick Falls' water is safe, it will likely be some time before the panic over the village's contaminated water supply dies down.

Residents will surely remember how state officials told them the water was safe to use for more than a year, only to reverse their stance after the federal Environmental Protection Agency told residents not to use the water late last year. This pattern of behavior doesn't exactly instill great confidence. If I lived in Hoosick Falls, I'd stick to bottled water for the foreseeable future.

Better safe than sorry -- that's my motto.

If anything, the uproar over the presence of perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, in Hoosick Falls' water supply revealed how little we know about it.

PFOA has been linked to a variety of health problems, including cancer, but is not regulated by the federal government and its health impacts are not well understood. Prior to the crisis in Hoosick Falls, the state considered the PFOA level in water safe as long as it was below 50,000 parts per trillion, while in 2009 the EPA issued an advisory putting the safe level for short-term

PFOA exposure at 400 parts per trillion. After Hoosick Falls' contaminated water was declared a Superfund site, the EPA recommended an even more stringent level for PFOA: 100 parts per trillion.

The state's response to the Hoosick Falls' water crisis was slow and uncertain, but Cuomo isn't wrong to suggest that the EPA should shoulder some of the blame.

One problem is the lack of federal guidelines regarding long-term exposure to the chemical, which the agency plans to address this spring when it releases updated health advisories. During his Sunday appearance in Hoosick Falls, Cuomo said, "We think the EPA should set a number, and whatever that number is, we'll follow. But we need the number."

A Monday New York Times article suggested that PFOA scares are likely to become more common, as communities near factories that once used the industrial chemical are likely to find unsafe levels of contamination if they test their water supplies. Kiah Morris, a Vermont legislator whose district includes Bennington, where several wells have tested positive for PFOA, told the Times that, "From an environmental perspective, we kind of fell asleep at the wheel when it came to those components. There's things we didn't know, and there's things we hoped we wouldn't find out."

That lack of knowledge is widespread, and it isn't helping matters.

The EPA's updated health advisory is sorely needed, and states will need to take it seriously when it's finally issued.

In the meantime, the situation in Hoosick Falls serves as a textbook example of how not to handle a public health crisis.

The next time something like this happens -- and there will almost certainly be a next time -- let's hope the response is quicker, clearer and better-informed.

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